

Message Text

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70

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6364

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 8720

E. O. 11652: GDS-1

TAGS: CI, BOL, PE, PFOR, PBOR

SUBJECT: BOLIVIA'S OUTLET TO THE SEA

REFS: (A) SANTIAGO 8606 (B) SANTIAGO 8682 (C) STATE 303998

1. SUMMARY: SENIOR FONMIN OFFICIAL IS REASONABLY OPTIMISTIC THAT AGREEMENT WILL BE REACHED ON BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR TO SEA, ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATION WILL BE LONG. HE STRONGLY BELIEVES THAT FOURTH PARTIES SHOULD STAY OUT OF NEGOTIATION AND LIMIT THEIR ROLE TO OAS CONTEXT. END SUMMARY.

2. FOREIGN MINISTRY POLITICAL ADVISOR ENRIQUE BERNSTEIN DECEMBER 30 GAVE ADCM RUNDOWN ON BACKGROUND AND STATE OF PLAY ON BOLIVIAN CORRIDOR. HE CONFIRMED MAIN LINES OF PRESS REPORTING ON CHILEAN PROPOSAL TO BOLIVIA (REF A). HE SAID GOB HAD IN AUGUST PRESENTED PACKAGE REQUEST FOR SOVEREIGN CORRIDOR DEBOUCHING ON SEA NORTH OF "ARICA'S SUBURBS," FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF BOLIVIAN COMMUNICATIONS THROUGH ARICA, AND BOLIVIAN ENCLAVE ON COAST FURTHER SOUTH, WITH CONNECTING ROAD TO BOLIVIA UNDER BOLIVIAN SOVEREIGNTY. GOC FLATLY TURNED DOWN ENCLAVE IDEA AND WILL NOT CONSIDER IT.

3. FONMINISTRY ADOPTED IDEA OF EXCHANGING TERRITORY AFTER TOUGH
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INTERNAL DISCUSSION, AND THEN WORKED IT THROUGH GOC. CHILEAN

NAVY WAS STRONGEST OPPONENT, AND BERNSTEIN PRAISED FONMIN ADMIRAL CARVAJAL FOR LEADING CAMPAIGN AGAINST HIS OWN NAVY COLLEAGUES. A KEY ARGUMENT WITH MILITARYSWAS THAT CHILE WOULD NO LONGER HAVE CONTIGUOUS FRONTIER WITH PERU, BUT ONLY TWO OTHER NEIGHBORS, THUS LIMITING PERUVIAN CAPABILITY FOR ATTACK/ BOLIVIAN AMBASSADOR IN SANTIAGO ALSO HELPED BY FOLLOWING BERNSTEIN'S ADVICE TO LOBBY WITH OUTSTANDING CIVILIANS.

4. BERNSTEIN SAID CHILEAN PROPOSAL WAS AS DESCRIBED IN PARA TWO REF A EXCEPT FOR SOME DETAILS. GOC ASKED FOR CESSION OF AMOUNT OF BOLIVIAN TERRITORY EQUAL TO AREA OF CORRIDOR. TERRITORY NEED NOT BE CONTIGUOUS, AND GOC DID NOT INDICATE WHAT IT WANTED, SINCE IT KNOWS LITTLE ABOUT BOLIVIAN LANDS JUST OVER BORDER. GOC HOPES, HOWEVER, TO GET SOME WATER TO BE USED IN NORTH -- FOR GREAT COPPER MINES AND MAJOR CITIES.

5. IN ADDITION TO CONDITIONS LISTED IN REF A, GOC CONDITIONED ITS PROPOSAL ON BOLIVIAN RESPECT FOR PERUVIAN RIGHTS TO USE OF TACNA-ARICA RAILROAD AND TWO CANALS IN LAND TO BE CEDED, AND ON BOLIVIAN RENUNCIATION OF ANY OTHER CLAIM AGAINST CHILE. GOB IN TURN ASKED FOR OAS (NOT UN) GUARANTEE OF CORRIDOR.

6. GOB HAS REPLIED TO CHILEAN FORMAL PROPOSAL WITH NOTE STATING GOB ACCEPTS IT AS BASIS FOR NEGOTIATION. GOP EARLY ON HAD BEEN TOLD INFORMALLY THAT GOC WAS TALKING TO BOLIVIA, AND CHILEANS HAD IMPRESSION NEW CIVILIAN AMBASSADOR WAS SENT TO SANTIAGO IN ORDER BETTER TO HANDLE MATTER. GOC HAS REQUESTED GOP'S CONCURRENCE IN OPENING NEGOTIATION AND WILL NOT PROCEED UNTIL GOP ANSWERS. BERNSTEIN SAID PERUVIAN ATTITUDE SEEMED GOOD, ALTHOUGH GOC HAS NO OFFICIAL WORD.

7. BERNSTEIN NOTED THAT NEGOTIATION IS NOT TRILATERAL, BUT BILATERAL AS BETWEEN CHILE AND BOLIVIA AND CHILE AND PERU. HE ADDED THAT GOC DEFINITELY WANTS NO FOURTH PARTIES INVOLVED. FRIENDS COULD BE USEFUL IN WORKING OUT THE OAS GUARANTEE OF THE NEW FRONTIER.

8. COMMENT: AS FAR AS EMBASSY CAN SEE, CHILEANS ARE CONDUCTING THIS NEGOTIATION SERIOUSLY AND CAREFULLY, WITH EVERY INTENTION OF CONSUMMATING IT SUCCESSFULLY. IT IS CLEAR THAT GOC WOULD NOT CONFIDENTIAL

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WELCOME ANY US INVOLVEMENT AT A TIME WHEN IT IS TAKING PAINS TO MAINTAIN CORRECT RELATIONSHIP WITH PERU AND IS AVOIDING ANY PRESSURE IN CONNECTION WITH CORRIDOR PROPOSAL. POPPER

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